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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001675

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMPI](#) [KDEM](#) [BA](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: DUTCH WANT GREATER INVOLVEMENT IN FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) November 11, 2005; 12 noon; Manama, Bahrain.

2. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.

A/S Dan Fried, EUR

Blake Thorkelson, NEA/PI

Richard Michaels, Notetaker

The Netherlands

Baroness Henriette van Lynden, MFA Director ) North Africa and Middle East

Ambassador to Bahrain and Kuwait Dr. Cor van Honk

3. (C) Summary. During a November 11 meeting with A/S Fried on the margins of the Forum for the Future in Bahrain, Dutch Baroness Henriette van Lynden, MFA Director ) North Africa and Middle East, reiterated GON support for the Foundation for the Future and expressed GON interest in playing a principal role in developing the NGO sector in the Middle East. Van Lynden emphasized the need to recruit more Arab countries, such as Egypt and Oman, into the separate Fund for the Future in order for the institution to achieve its goals. End summary.

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Dutch Want Active Role in Developing NGO Sector  
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4. (C) Dutch Baroness Henriette van Lynden told A/S Fried that the GON intends to play an active role in developing a Middle Eastern civil society, specifically in the Gulf. While North Africa is covered by the Barcelona Process, which she described as a stumbling baby, the GON is eyeing cooperative opportunities with Gulf states in the areas of democracy, rule of law, emancipation and entrepreneurship. "We want to be seen to be actively involved," such as the "modest" contribution the GON made to the Foundation for the Future, the Baroness explained.

5. (C) Van Lynden characterized the NGO sector in the Middle East as "quite weak" and in need of "propping up." She explained that these NGOs need to play a greater role in civil society and increase interaction with local governments. The GON would like to focus on NGO development, leaving a "Dutch footprint" on its Foundation involvement. In fact, van Lynden is to join Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende November 12 to begin a visit to the UAE, Oman and Qatar to discuss civil society development, she reported.

6. (C) Baroness underscored the Foundation,s need to support a viable NGO sector allowed to communicate with the local government to achieve the institution,s objectives. She cited an October visit with the Gulf Research Council (GRC) in Dubai as an example. The group, fully funded by a Saudi, functions as an NGO despite a UAE ban on such organizations, she explained. The GRC, like many of her NGO contacts, is fatalistic toward prospects of these restrictions ending, van Lynden added. In the Baroness, opinion, the Foundation should raise the awareness of the NGO issue.

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Implementing the Foundation,s Objectives  
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7. (C) Baroness also inquired about next steps after the Foundation for the Future,s announcement November 12. A/S Fried identified the creation of a strong board of directors as a key to the Foundation,s success. Van Lynden suggested contacting Dutch corporate sponsors such as Shell. After reviewing a list of participating Middle East countries in the Foundation and Fund, Baroness described the involvement of Egypt and Oman, which have yet to join, as key to the institutions, success. "It's not enough," she added, "you need critical mass." A/S Fried offered to share the GON,s interest in Foundation and Fund implementation with NEA/DAS Carpenter.

18. (U) This message has been cleared by A/S Fried.

MONROE